In the Claims:

1-8 (previously canceled).

9 (amended) A modular wheel for mounting on a vehicle, the wheel comprising:

an inboard wheel half;

an outboard wheel half;

a center section interposed between and separably coupled with the inboard wheel half and the outboard wheel half; and

an adjustable first bead lock ring having a first bead lock surface, wherein the wheel presents a second bead lock surface such that the first bead lock surface ~~and~~ adjustably cooperates with the second bead lock surface ~~cooperate~~ to facilitate sealing a first bead of a tire therebetween.

10 (original) The modular wheel as set forth in claim 9, wherein the inboard wheel half includes a plurality of stiffening ribs.

11 (original) The modular wheel as set forth in claim 9, wherein the inboard wheel half presents an exterior surface having a circumferential raised rib operable to facilitate retaining a tire on the wheel.

12 (original) The modular wheel as set forth in claim 9, wherein the outboard wheel half includes a plurality of stiffening ribs.

13 (original) The modular wheel as set forth in claim 9, wherein the outboard wheel half and the inboard wheel half are constructed from a polymer.

14 (original) The modular wheel as set forth in claim 13, wherein the polymer is a toughened nylon.

15 (amended) The modular wheel as set forth in claim 13, wherein the polymer is reinforced with up to approximately 50% of fibers selected from the group consisting of: carbon fibers, glass fibers, and ~~kevlar fibers~~ materials having long highly-oriented molecular chains with strong interchain bonding.

16 (original) The modular wheel as set forth in claim 9, wherein the center section is constructed from aluminum.

17 (original) The modular wheel as set forth in claim 9, wherein the center section is constructed from magnesium.

18 (original) The modular wheel as set forth in claim 9, wherein the center section is constructed from a polymer and includes a compression limiting insert.

19 (original) The modular wheel as set forth in claim 18, wherein the compression limiting insert is molded into the polymer.

20 (original) The modular wheel as set forth in claim 9, wherein the center section presents a first center section contact surface for close contact with a corresponding contact surface of the inboard wheel half, and presents a second center section contact surface for close contact with a corresponding contact surface of the outboard wheel half, and the first center section contact surface and the second center section contact surface includes a groove for receiving an O-ring seal.

21 (original) The modular wheel as set forth in claim 9, wherein the center section presents a first center section contact surface for close contact with a corresponding contact surface of the inboard wheel half, and presents a second center section contact surface for close contact with a corresponding contact surface of the outboard wheel half, and the first center section contact surface and the second center section contact surface includes a groove for receiving a dynamic u-cup seal.

22 (original) The modular wheel as set forth in claim 9, wherein the first bead lock surface presents a first portion of an alignment mechanism, and the second bead lock surface presents a second portion of the alignment mechanism, wherein the first portion and the second portion of the alignment mechanism cooperate to align a first bolt hole in the first bead lock surface with a second bolt hole in the second bead lock surface.

23 (original) The modular wheel as set forth in claim 9, further comprising a second bead lock ring having a third bead lock surface, wherein the wheel presents a fourth bead lock surface such that the third bead lock surface and the fourth bead lock surface cooperate to facilitate sealing a second bead of the tire therebetween.

24 (original) The modular wheel as set forth in claim 9, further comprising a mud plug positioned within the outboard wheel half and operable to prevent substantial entry thereinto of mud and debris.

25 (original) The modular wheel as set forth in claim 24, wherein the mud plug is removably secured within the outboard wheel half using a quick release fastener.

26 (original) A modular wheel for mounting on a vehicle, the wheel comprising:

an inboard wheel half having a first plurality of stiffening ribs and having a circumferential raised rib operable to facilitate retaining a tire on the wheel;

an outboard wheel half having a second plurality of stiffening ribs and a first bead lock surface presenting a first bolt hole and a first portion of an alignment mechanism;

a center section interposed between and separably coupled with the inboard wheel half and the outboard wheel half;

a bead lock ring having a second bead lock surface presenting a second bolt hole and a second portion of the alignment mechanism, wherein the first portion cooperates with the second portion to thereby align the first bolt hole of the first bead lock surface with the second bolt hole of the second bead lock surface; and

a mud plug removably secured within the outboard wheel half using a quick release fastener, and operable to prevent substantial entry thereinto of mud and debris.

27 (original) The modular wheel as set forth in claim 26, wherein the center section presents a first center section contact surface for close contact with a corresponding contact surface of the inboard wheel half, and presents a second center section contact surface for close contact with a corresponding contact surface of the outboard wheel half, and the first center section contact surface and the second center section contact surface includes a groove for receiving an O-ring seal.

28 (original) The modular wheel as set forth in claim 26, wherein the center section presents a first center section contact surface for close contact with a corresponding contact surface of the inboard wheel half, and presents a second center section contact surface for close contact with a corresponding contact surface of the outboard wheel half, and the first center section contact surface and the second center section contact surface includes a groove for receiving a dynamic u-cup seal.

29 (amended) A wheel for mounting on a vehicle, the wheel comprising:

a wheel body including an inboard portion and an outboard portion; and

an adjustable first bead lock ring having a first bead lock surface, wherein the wheel presents a second bead lock surface such that the first bead lock surface ~~and~~ adjustably cooperates with the second bead lock surface ~~cooperate~~ to facilitate sealing a first bead of a tire therebetween.

30 (original) The wheel as set forth in claim 29, wherein the inboard wheel portion includes a plurality of stiffening ribs.

31 (original) The wheel as set forth in claim 29, wherein the inboard wheel portion presents an exterior surface having a circumferential raised rib operable to facilitate retaining a tire on the wheel.

32 (original) The wheel as set forth in claim 29, wherein the outboard wheel portion includes a plurality of stiffening ribs.

33 (original) The wheel as set forth in claim 29, wherein the wheel body is substantially constructed from a polymer.

34 (original) The wheel as set forth in claim 33, wherein the polymer is a toughened nylon.

35 (amended) The wheel as set forth in claim 33, wherein the polymer is reinforced with up to approximately 50% of fibers selected from the group consisting of: carbon fibers, glass fibers, and ~~kevlar fibers~~ materials having long highly-oriented molecular chains with strong interchain bonding.

36 (canceled).

37 (original) The wheel as set forth in claim 29, further comprising a second bead lock ring having a third bead lock surface, wherein the wheel presents a fourth bead lock surface such that the third bead lock surface and the fourth bead lock surface cooperate to facilitate sealing a second bead of the tire therebetween.

38 (original) The wheel as set forth in claim 29, further comprising a mud plug positioned within the outboard wheel portion and operable to prevent substantial entry thereinto of mud and debris.

39 (original) The wheel as set forth in claim 38, wherein the mud plug is removably secured within the outboard wheel half using a quick release fastener.

40 (original) A wheel for mounting on a vehicle, the wheel comprising:

a first bead lock surface presenting a first bolt hole and presenting a first portion of an alignment mechanism; and

a bead lock ring having a second bead lock surface and presenting a second bolt hole and a second portion of the alignment mechanism,

wherein the first portion of the alignment mechanism cooperates with the second portion to thereby align the first bolt hole of the first bead lock surface with the second bolt hole of the second bead lock surface, and the first bead lock surface and the second bead lock surface cooperate to facilitate sealing a bead of a tire therebetween.

41 (original) The wheel as set forth in claim 40, wherein the alignment mechanism includes a projection and a corresponding slot, wherein the projection fits within the corresponding slot.

42 (original) The wheel as set forth in claim 40, wherein the first bolt hole is internally threaded.

43 (original) The wheel as set forth in claim 40, wherein the bead lock ring presents an outer surface, and the second bolt hole is countersunk within the outer surface.

44 (original) The wheel as set forth in claim 40, further including a taper on the second bead lock surface operable to properly align the bead of the tire thereon.

45-47 (canceled).

48 (amended) ~~The wheel as set forth in claim 45~~ A wheel for mounting on a vehicle, the wheel comprising:

an outboard cavity through which access is had to a mechanism for removably coupling the wheel with the vehicle; and

a cover removably secured to a wheel half using a quick release fastener, and operable to substantially prevent entry of mud and debris into the outboard cavity, wherein the mud plug is provided with a center hole for accommodating an axle of the vehicle.

49 (new) A modular wheel for mounting on a vehicle, the wheel comprising:

an inboard wheel half having a first plurality of stiffening ribs and having a circumferential raised rib operable to facilitate retaining a tire on the wheel;

an outboard wheel half having a second plurality of stiffening ribs and a first bead lock surface presenting a first bolt hole and a first portion of an alignment mechanism;

a center section interposed between and separably coupled with the inboard wheel half and the outboard wheel half;

a bead lock ring having a second bead lock surface presenting a second bolt hole and a second portion of the alignment mechanism, wherein the first portion cooperates with the second portion to thereby align the first bolt hole of the first bead lock surface with the second bolt hole of the second bead lock surface; and

a cover removably secured within the outboard wheel half using a quick release fastener, and operable to prevent substantial entry thereinto of mud and debris.

50 (new) A wheel for mounting on a vehicle, the wheel comprising:

an outboard cavity through which access is had to a mechanism for removably coupling the wheel with the vehicle; and

a cover removably secured to a wheel half using a quick release fastener, and operable to substantially prevent entry of mud and debris into the outboard cavity, wherein the cover is provided with a center hole for accommodating an axle of the vehicle.

51 (new) A wheel for mounting on a vehicle, the wheel comprising:

a wheel body including an inboard portion and an outboard portion; and

a first bead lock ring having a first bead lock surface, wherein the wheel presents a second bead lock surface such that the first bead lock surface and the second bead lock surface cooperate to facilitate sealing a first bead of a tire therebetween,

wherein the first bead lock surface presents a first portion of an alignment mechanism, and the second bead lock surface presents a second portion of the alignment mechanism, wherein the first portion and the second portion of the alignment mechanism cooperate to align a first bolt hole in the first bead lock surface with a second bolt hole in the second bead lock surface.